

UK Patent Application GB 2 153 845 A

(43) Application published 29 Aug 1985

(21) Application No 8403236

(22) Date of filing 7 Feb 1984

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(51) INT CL⁴
C22C 19/05

(52) Domestic classification

C7A 71X 782 783 A233 A235 A237 A239 A23Y
A241 A243 A245 A247 A249 A24X A253 A255 A257
A259 A25Y A260 A263 A266 A269 A27X A299 A300
A303 A305 A307 A309 A30Y A311 A313 A316 A319
A31X A320 A323 A326 A329 A330 A337 A339 A33Y
A340 A341 A343 A345 A347 A349 A34Y A350 A35X
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U1S 1577 C7A

(56), (58) (continued overleaf)

(54) Production of superalloy sheet

(57) A nickel-chromium or nickel-cobalt-chromium base superalloy in which the content of hardening elements is such that the value of the hardener factor

$$\frac{1}{2}(\% \text{Mo} + \% \text{W} + \% \text{Nb} + \% \text{Ta} + \% \text{Hf}) + (\% \text{V} + \% \text{Ti} + 2\% \text{Al})$$

is from 15.5 to 25% is formed into sheet by consolidating powder of the alloy into a bar by means including extrusion and hot rolling the bar to sheet in a direction transverse to the direction of extrusion.

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SPECIFICATION

Production of superalloy sheet

5 This invention relates to the production of sheet of nickel-chromium and nickel-cobalt-chromium based superalloys, and to the production of articles and parts therefrom. 5

The name superalloy is commonly given to alloys used for articles and parts that are subjected in service to high stress at elevated temperatures for long periods of time, and therefore require a combination of high stress rupture strength and resistance to creep at high temperature.

10 As the content of hardening and strengthening elements such as molybdenum, tungsten, niobium, tantalum, hafnium, vanadium, titanium and aluminium used to confer these properties is increased to the levels required by modern gas-turbine engine design, it becomes more and more difficult to obtain a homogeneous structure and freedom from segregation in the alloys in the cast form. They are therefore increasingly being made by consolidating pre-alloyed powder 10 of the desired composition by hot isostatic pressing and/or extrusion, followed by hot and cold-rolling to sheet or other forms. 15

The presence of the hardening elements in large amounts necessarily also makes the alloys difficult to hot-work, and particularly to hot-roll. Thus we find that if the total content of hardening elements is too high, attempts to work bar extruded from pre-alloyed powder to sheet 20 by hot-rolling in the direction of extrusion (so-called straight rolling) result in such extensive cracking that the yield of usable product is unacceptably small.

We have now surprisingly found that the incidence of cracking in the hot-rolling of such bar having a high content of hardening elements is greatly reduced if, contrary to normal practice, the bar is cross-rolled, i.e. rolled transverse to the direction of extrusion. When this is done, 25 cracking at the ends of the extruded bar may also be controlled, and often eliminated, by "buttering" these ends with a deposit of a suitable metal or alloy before cross-rolling. 25

Generally speaking, the cross-rolling procedure of the invention is useful for alloys having a total content of hardening elements such that the "hardener factor" $\frac{1}{2} (\% \text{Mo} + \% \text{W} + \% \text{Nb} + \% \text{Ta} + \% \text{Hf}) + (\% \text{V} + \% \text{Ti} + 2\% \text{Al})$ is from 15.5 to 25%, more particu- 30 larly 17 to 23% or preferably 18 to 22%. 30

Broad and preferred ranges of alloy compositions that may be used (subject to their hardener factors being within the ranges set forth above) are set out in Table I.

TABLE I
35 Composition ranges (wt.%)

	Broad	Preferred	
Cr	2-20	6-17	
40 Co	0-25	5-20	40
Mo	0-20	0-15	
W	0-20	0-15	
Nb	0-5	0-2	
Ta	0-10	0-5	
45 V	0-5	0-2	45
Hf	0-5	0-3	
Ti	0-10	1-6	
Al	2-10	3-8	
Zr	0-1	0-0.2	
50 B	0-1	0-0.85	50
C	0-1	0-0.2	
Y + Ce + La	0-1	0-0.2	
Ni and impurities	Balance	Balance	
	(Ni + Co > 55%)	(Ni + Co > 55%)	
55			55

To illustrate the invention, pre-alloyed powders of the two Alloys A and B having the contents set forth in Table II were produced by argon atmosphere. The powder of Alloy A had a particle size of less than 150 μm , and 84% by weight of the powder of alloy B was also less than 150 μm and the whole of it was less than 250 μm . Powder of each alloy was placed in deep drawn 60 mild steel cans 54 mm outside diameter, 100 mm long and 2.5 mm wall thickness which were evacuated at 300°C, sealed, and extruded to bar approximately 15.5 \times 7.6 mm section to consolidate the alloy. In each case the predetermined optimum extrusion temperature was used, namely 1120°C for alloy A and 1200°C for alloy B. 60

65 The bar was then cut into lengths (76 mm except where otherwise specified) and subjected 65

to hot-rolling at a roll surface speed of 40 m/min, using the predetermined optimum hot-rolling temperature of 1080°C for alloy A and 1130°C for alloy B.

It was found that the extended bar of alloy A could be hot rolled by straight rolling in one pass using a roll gap of 0.75 mm from a thickness of 7.6 mm down to 1.20 mm (an 84% reduction) with no edge cracking and only slight front end cracking. Thus hot rolled strip or sheet of alloy A, which had a hardener factor of 14.11%, could be produced by straight rolling.

Attempts to hot-roll the extruded bar of alloy B (hardener factor 19.53%) by straight rolling in a similar manner were unsuccessful. With a roll gap of 1.0 mm the bar split assunder, and even with a roll gap of 3.0 mm it suffered severe edge cracking and split up to half the length of the sample. Even the use of successive passes in which the roll gap was reduced from an initial value of 7.0 mm by 0.5 mm per pass, with reheating between passes, gave unacceptable edge cracking even when the thickness had only been reduced to 6.0 mm (a reduction of 21% from the initial thickness of 7.6 mm).

In contrast to these unsatisfactory results with alloy B, cross-rolling of portions of the extruded bar 76 mm, 127 mm, and even 254 mm long at 1130°C with a roll gap of 2.0 mm and even 1.5 mm resulted in little or no cracking along the long edges of the bar, where hopelessly bad cracking had occurred in the straight rolling tests. Reductions of 72% were thus obtained with bar 7.6 mm long and of 60–64% with portions 127 mm long. Some end cracking occurred, but this was largely eliminated by "buttering" the ends of the portions of extruded bar with a

20 weld deposit of nickel or a 72 Ni-20 Cr-3 Mn-Nb alloy. 20

It is not clear whether these weld deposits act by a purely mechanical effect, or by avoiding cooling of the ends of the bar.

All the hot rolling operations described above were carried out without removal of the mild steel can from the surface of the extruded bar. This is believed to be beneficial by avoid chilling 25 of the surface of the superalloy by the surface of the rolls or assisting mechanically or by lubrication.

Another alloy to which the cross-rolling procedure of the invention may usefully be applied is Alloy C in Table II.

The production of sheet of Ni-Cr and NiCoCr based superalloys by extrusion of prealloyed 30 powder and cross-rolling the extruded bar according to the invention is particularly useful as a step in the production of the so-called wafer blades for gas turbine engines. These blades are described for example by R E Anderson et al in a paper entitled "Use of RSR alloys for High Performance Turbine Air Foils" published in the Proceedings of the Second Conference on Rapidly Solidified Materials, held at Reston, Virginia in March, 1980. In the production of such 35 blades a stack of sheets of

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TABLE II
ALLOY COMPOSITION

Alloy	Weight percent, balance nickel										Factor
	Cr	Co	Mo	W	V	Ta	Hf	T1	Al	Zr	
A	Anal.	14.8	16.8	5.02	-	-	-	3.6	4.0	0.045	0.021
	Max.	16	19	5.3	-	-	-	3.7	4.3	0.08	0.03
	Min.	14	16	4.8	-	-	-	3.3	3.8	0.02	0.01
B	Anal.	8.9	9.9	0.01	9.96	-	2.6	1.6	1.45	5.5	0.06
	Max.	10	11	1	11	-	3.0	1.8	1.7	5.7	0.08
	Min.	8	9	0	9	-	2.3	1.2	1.3	5.3	0.02
C	Nom.	10	15	3	-	0.85	-	-	4.8	5.5	0.05
	Max.	11	17	3.3	-	1.0	-	-	5.0	5.7	0.08
	Min.	9	13	2.8	-	0.7	-	-	4.6	5.3	0.02

$$\text{Factor} = \frac{\text{Mo} + \text{W} + \text{Nb} + \text{Ta} + \text{Hf}}{2} + \text{V} + \text{T1} + 2\text{Al}$$

superalloy having channels etched in their surfaces which cooperate to form cooling passages in the finished blade is bonded, e.g. by diffusion bonding, to form a block from which a blade is machined.

It is advantageous to subject the sheets or wafers to directional recrystallisation either before 5 or after assembling to give an aligned grain structure, and for this purpose the hot-rolled sheet may first be further reduced in thickness by cold-rolling using the procedure described in GB-A-2 110 241. This procedure comprises successively cold rolling the sheet in two directions at rights angles to one another to effect a total reduction of thickness of greater than 50% and with a ratio of the reductions in the first and second cold rolling being from 70:30 to 80:20. 10

10 The sheets are then heated, either before or after assembly into the block, to effect directional recrystallisation. For this purpose it is an advantage of Alloy B sheet prepared by the process of the invention that it has a gamma—solvus temperature of 1245—1250°C but does not liquefy below 1280°C, so that it can be heated within this temperature range for recrystallisation. 10

15 CLAIMS 15

1. Process of producing sheet of an alloy containing from 2 to 20% chromium, from 2 to 10% aluminium, 0 to 25% cobalt, 0 to 20% molybdenum, 0 to 20% tungsten, 0 to 5% niobium, 0 to 10% tantalum, 0 to 5% vanadium, 0 to 5% hafnium, 0 to 10% titanium, 0 to 1% zirconium, 0 to 1% boron, 0 to 1% carbon and 0 to 1% in all of yttrium, cerium and 20 lanthanum, the balance, apart from impurities, being nickel in an amount such that the total content of nickel and cobalt is at least 55%, wherein the content of the elements Mo, W, Nb, Ta, Hf, V, Ti and Al is such that the value of the hardener factor $\frac{1}{2}(\% \text{Mo} + \% \text{W} + \% \text{Nb} + \% \text{Ta} + \% \text{Hf}) + (\% \text{V} + \% \text{Ti} + 2\% \text{Al})$ is from 15.5 to 25%, which 25 comprises consolidating powder of the alloy into a bar by means including extrusion and rolling the bar to sheet in a direction transverse to the direction of extrusion. 25

Printed in the United Kingdom for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Dd 8818935, 1985, 4235.
Published at The Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings, London, WC2A 1AY, from which copies may be obtained.